

**MINUTES OF
THE ADVISORY BOARD FOR INTERPRETERS BETWEEN HEARING INDIVIDUALS
AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE DEAF, DEAFBLIND, HARD OF HEARING, OR ORAL
DEAF**

November 6, 2020

Quarterly Meeting Minutes

The Advisory Board for Interpreters convened at 2:00 p.m., at Freeway Medical Building, Room 906, Little Rock, AR. Carel Dunaway opened the meeting by doing roll call. An ADH COVID-19 Visitor Monitoring form was used in place of a sign in sheet.

COVID restrictions are in place. Temperatures were taken before entry & all participants are six feet apart & wearing mask.

Board members present included: Board president, Mr. Carel Dunaway, Arthur Babin, Ms. Daisy Dippel and Ms. Stephanie Ott.

By telephone: Ms. Debbie Pearce & Ms. Nancy Quinn.

ADH staff in attendance included: Mr. Brian Nichols, ADH attorney & Geray Pickle, CHA ADMO.

Interpreters/Transcribers present: Jonathan Smith, Will Gorum, Carolyn Jolley, Jaimee Harrell & Karen Owens.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 6th meeting minutes were approved.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Carel Dunaway: Mentioned that the Advisory Board has a licensure.

LICENSURE COMMITTEE REPORT

Daisy Dippel: After speaking with the attorney for the Advisory Board, we decided that we will have a waiver on hand as the agency requested. The waiver will be used just in case an agency has to send an interpreter to an assignment that doesn't meet qualifications. The waiver will include two-party signatures. That way, the agency isn't liable. This will only be used during those rare circumstances, without taking away deaf rights and will also follow licensure law. The waiver will not be announced to the public, but it will be there for any agency that requests it.

Brian Nichols: Clarify that the person receiving the interpretation is the one making the request for the interpreter. There's also discussion about what would go into {inaudible} If they specifically request a certain individual, they are put on notice {inaudible}

Daisy Dippel: "It will be put in the waiver that the interpreter is not qualified. The deaf person would be signing saying they accept that. That's something that licensure will have on hand. We are still working on the levels of licensure. It's very vague. As a committee, we're working on making it more specific. Hopefully, we'll get that taken care of and sent to Brian and ready for the next board meeting."

INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Arthur Babin: A grievance letter was filed by Jayson Lawson. He is a deaf gentleman who was trying to go to school in South Arkansas where he's taking courses to complete his GED. He asked the college to provide interpreting services. Amy Sturdeven, who is the Director of Adult Education, was trying to find a certified interpreter, but it was difficult in doing so because most of them lived away from the El Dorado area. They used Deborah Wilson who interprets in the community. They asked Jayson if he would accept her as an interpreter during the Spring 2020 semester.

He signed a piece of paper and accepted her as the interpreter. It was reported to the university that Jayson was not attending classes. In the grievance, Amy was asked in February to see why he wasn't attending. Apparently, Jayson knew that Deborah wasn't qualified or licensed. The grievance was filed July 23rd. He said that he contacted Amy in September. Arthur said that he has tried to get in touch with Jayson for clarification.

I sent Amy information about the interpreter law. She said she tried to contact certified interpreters. She did finally get the information for Cheryl Seymore at ARS. Cheryl could help her out with information. Also, they spoke about VRI interpreting. We will be following up with a letter to Amy. I tried to get in touch with Deborah Wilson. I was not able to reach her. I will send a letter that states that Arkansas does have a law that interpreters must be licensed. Hopefully, if we hear back from her, we can help her to get her qualification and credentials. We can follow up with Jayson, let him know what he's done and follow up with the investigation.

Carel Dunaway: Art, Nancy has stated that you did a good job.

Nancy Quinn: {transcriber could not hear nor understand}

Nancy mentioned that Art cleaned up some stuff that she had done and will send it out to committee members on procedures and filing a complaint.

Arthur Babin: corrections to the letterhead need to be made and one of the "for interpreters" need to be removed from the grievance form.

OLD BUSINESS

Carel Dunaway: There are four committees. At the previous meeting, we had tabled – Licensure, Investigations, Budget, Fee/Ad hoc and Technical. We do have three on the first two & two on the last two. If we have the full board of seven, Michael has not been available. If we have that, we will have four members on the first two and three on the last two. With six members, we have twelve. We are currently at 10. Debbie is on one committee and would like to serve on another. She does not want to be on the Technical committee.

Debbie Pearce: stated that she will be on any committee, except Tech committee.

Carel Dunaway: suggested waiting until the next meeting to make decisions on committee assignments. There will be a new board member.

Arthur Babin: mentioned an email sent by Cheryl on behalf of the agency regarding budget.

Carel Dunaway: Following the agenda, it does state that. Other old business? Non?

Arthur Babin: The logo. The technical committee is not fulfilled. New business. Daisy, there was a question to discuss the reception and who would be interpreting for the D/deaf client.

NEW BUSINESS:

Daisy Dippel: Asked if they can come up with a brochure to pass out. Ex. Interpreting at a medical facility, but they weren't sure why I was there. If we can provide the facility with a brochure with the Arkansas law stating that they should be providing an interpreter who is licensed. Daisy says she is not sure if she should be stepping outside of her role and explaining her role on the licensure board, etc. States that it would be nice to have something to hand out while staying within her role as interpreter, but also educating.

Stephanie Ott: stated that she had the same issue when interpreting in a mental health facility. They were saying to the client, go try this and the deaf person said that they did try, but they wouldn't provide an interpreter. I wanted to explain. You can advocate for yourself. I was in the same boat. I wanted to hand the facility something that says that you must accommodate.

Daisy Dippel: stated that creating a brochure and instructional video on our website explaining to the community so they can educate themselves, would be huge. The brochure will help the interpreters in those situations. It's a two-part process and these things need to be done, like yesterday.

Nancy Quinn: Carel, as a family member, I would like to have that too. We get this all the time. That would be helpful in that sense.

Carel Dunaway: stated that he knows you often wish you could explain and thinks a pamphlet is a good idea. We need to gather what we want on there.

Stephanie Ott: They started making something but was not quite sure what they wanted. When the Technology committee is done, they want to work on that and have more input on how it's worded. They don't want it to be abrasive. Thoughts were, "Did You Know" side to get people interested in the community. Here's what can happen if you don't provide this as the ending. Something small and easy to hand out.

Carel Dunaway: stated that they would love feedback. They need someone willing to do a video presentation to make sure Deaf people are aware and that they know what it says.

Daisy Dippel: stated that a member of the Deaf community should do that and could assign that to the technology committee.

Carel Dunaway: Does it have to be someone on the board?

Daisy Dippel: No

Stephanie Ott: stated that a Deaf leader in the community would be great and would be happy to work with whoever.

Carel Dunaway: Perfect. Asked Daisy if there is any other discussion? Carel also states that they should have someone strong in ASL to have that. Maybe Monty would be good? They need to all understand it. The sign is clear.

Daisy Dippel: said yes, she would love to see this stay on the agenda and get it completed by 2021. The need is huge, but it keeps getting passed off. This has been talked about for a long time and hasn't been accomplished.

Carel Dunaway: Michael McMahan is missing. They have recommended Katie Becker replace that position. The Department of health has done a review and sent letter of congrats. Swearing in will be after this meeting and her term starts next year.

Back in August, I wrote down information about myself on the agenda but overlooked that part. I wanted you to know that I'm planning to stay for the next term. My term will be done in December. I will continue the next term. That way, you do not need to replace me.

Third item: Financial support and budget. Kimberly is not here to explain this.

Geray Pickle: {speaking away from microphone, unable to hear}
collected fees to support half of Cheryl Allen's salary. The total amount would be \$21,377 per year. It's for Administrative support. As of June 30th, we had a balance of \$159,648. I don't know if there are any questions, but they asked that I present it.

Carel Dunaway: asked if the money was coming from the interpreter payments, their licenses, or taxes. Stated that he is not sure how they're getting that.

Geray Pickle: The fees

Carel Dunaway: Ok, thank you for clarifying. I understand.

Daisy Dippel: her first thought is if we're using some of the budget for administrative costs, then she feels like the renewals that should have been received by now can be processed in a timely manner. If somebody is having a salaried position, she feels the administrative duties should include the renewals, updates to the website, the tech issue that we have. She thinks the money should support that as well. That's partially why the interpreters pay those fees. She also states that they aren't getting it reviewed on time. I refer people to our webpage, and it's outdated. The committees and board members aren't correct. She feels like those should be addressed if it's going to be included in the budget.

Geray Pickle: Stated that she thinks it's perfect. She also thinks that's been part of the issue. We need designated staff to help. With the website, there are things to update. Maybe specifics can be drawn up and made available to the board. That's what we're estimating it to be. We had two people doing it for a while and we're down to one person. It's about 20 hours a week. It's not 20 hours every week. Some weeks it's 40 hours and sometimes it's 10.

Daisy Dippel: Asked if the person is willing to be a point of contact. They need a designated contact for the licensure questions, complaints, and grievances.

Geray Pickle: asked if it would be possible for you to put in writing what you want this person to do. Then we could have a discussion at the next meeting. We can get that together. That would be great."

Nancy Quinn: Asked a question. One of the people there, Cheryl, the other day. Asked if there was a supervisor that's over her.

Geray Pickle: Kim Scott is Cheryl's supervisor.

Nancy Quinn: asked if the state has specific requirements?

Geray Pickle: stated that it can be added to the functional job description. I could become part of it. It needs to be formalized.

Nancy Quinn: asked where the advisory board will be in the future, if the money is not met. Whether she is on or not, where is the advisory board and the responsibility of that legally?

Brian Nichols: stated that the money is not there and asked if how much is coming in each year has been taken into consideration.

Geray Pickle: Yes. Stated that the amount elected would be in there every year.

Stephanie Ott: stated that there have been no fines for wrongdoing yet, so there is no money coming in. Also stated that If they are here to support interpreters having a license and get complaints, but never fine anyone, than there won't be any income.

Geray Pickle: other than the fees collected.

Stephanie Ott: stated that for them to get their license, she doesn't know what that money is for.

Nancy Quinn: stated that she thinks that there is money that's been discussed in the past. She's on the budget committee. Part of that was making something for the website. That's been with technology. That would be a big cost.

Carel Dunaway: stated that in the past, three years ago when they joined the board, they had a website and it was not up to date. When they asked somebody about it, they were told that they were busy & needed time allotted for that.

Geray Pickle: Asked if that was part of the technology committee.

Brian Nichols: the board passed it on to the Department of Health. They said that they were busy and didn't have time to do so. It's been stagnant.

Stephanie Ott: stated that they understand that they were waiting for information.

Brian Nichols: St. Claire was the one that updated the website. Also stated that St. Claire showed him. The website has been updated & things have been added.

Nancy Quinn: Stated that she asked Cheryl about the website because she was on there as an interpreter and she's not an interpreter. That is not her role. She is a community member. Cheryl gave her two names to call to change that.

Geray Pickle: Knows Melissa Turner.

Brian Nichols: stated that he does know Ms. Turner. Also stated that this was done in our legal department. As far as committee members go, that's like it was. If something needs to be changed, we need to know what to change it to.

Arthur Babin: Asked where the account was for the money they collect from fees.

Geray Pickle: stated that the money is at the Department of Health where we collect the fee. The balance has been there for quite a while. It came under the center for Health Advancement. There was discussion about money for the website; money for interpretation that was going to be put on the website. Maybe because the tech committee hasn't been operating, that hasn't been done.

The balance is \$159,648 as of the 30th. We collect fees constantly as people renew their licenses. Generally, one time per year. Geray also stated that she can speak about the delay. There was some cleanup that had to be done. Some inactive members were receiving invoices and was asked to be cleaned up before we sent them out. That was done this past week. We were trying to print bills yesterday. They should be going out.

Carel Dunaway: any other comments or questions? Moving on. Other matters and public comments. Did you receive the letter from Denise Butler about VRI needing licensure?

Daisy Dippel: I took care of that.

Will Gorum: made some public comments. It can take months for renewals to be processed. I am forced to send interpreters out who look like they are not in compliance. It makes contract compliance extremely difficult for us as agency owners. How can we tighten up that timeline and expedite renewals?

I would also like to comment on the proposal from Daisy about the FAQ flyer and the discussion with Stephanie. I have seen doctor's offices use employees who are not credentialed. It has been reported multiple times. There was the case of using an unqualified interpreter.

I work very hard to stay in compliance. I am frustrated. There are agencies that have failed to comply with Licensure. They ignore this with impunity. This is in the public record. At this point, strongly worded letters do not seem effective. This is a matter of public health. This is not the purpose of the board. With all due respect, the board is not accomplishing what it was designed to do. I would like the board to address this with more than a strongly worded letter.

Arthur Babin: asked if the doctor's office that's not in compliance when hiring a credentialed interpreter, would be fined.

Stephanie Ott: we can, but we are not.

Arthur Babin: If after the first occurrence, should the doctor's offices be fined? Is it a \$1500 fine?

Carel Dunaway: says that he thinks the rules and regulations state how much the fine is.

Arthur Babin: asked if it's also related to universities.

Carel Dunaway: we will look again.

Stephanie Ott: stated that it goes with compliance under ADA. If they have a budget and employees, they are required. Now, we have licensure on top of that. We have teeth and we have backing.

Jaimee Harrell: I want to speak as a community interpreter. Historically, this was set up because there was an agency who hired an interpreter who was not qualified. That is why this was set up.

Part of my understanding, when I pay for my license, you are protecting my job. We have people in the community who we know. They are working as interpreters who are not licensed or certified and have not taken a test.

I, as a certified and licensed interpreter, am not getting that work and they are not getting in trouble. The interrupter, the entity, they are not getting fined and I am missing work. This board is to protect the safety and quality of our interpreters and the D/deaf community. We must protect the jobs of interpreters as well.

Carel Dunaway: Agrees and supports that. Wonders if all the doctor's offices and universities are aware that they need to have licensure? Who is educating them? How do we get the info disseminated so that they do what we expect?

Will Gorum: responds to Carel. Colleges and institutions, the Arkansas Association of Higher Education and Disability. They work with higher education to make sure they provide accommodation. There are people like Melanie Thornton, who have been board members. There are resources. They have access to the info.

Stephanie Ott: that is where the first offense comes in of the harsh letter. You are required to provide accommodation. After this, you will be fined. Stephanie stated that she worked at ARS. Holly Ketchum works very hard to educate as many people as will let her in the door. She has been into many mental health places & agencies with her. Holly has educated them

Carel Dunaway: ok, thank you. We need to work on that.

Will Gorum: When we are looking at attendance at these board meetings, I am the only one making comments. I am an agency owner, sometimes service provider. I have to step out of my role. The board is not getting feedback from stakeholders. The info is posted on the website. There used to be more representation. There needs to be an indication of when these meetings happen. Dates need to be sent to stakeholders so feedback can be solicited. Agency owners, etc. are not the only ones giving feedback.

There has been no involvement. I would like to see bridge lines for people to dial in, notification of meetings, etc. sent out to Arkansas Association for the Deaf & Little Rock Black Deaf Advocates, etc.

Carel: Yes, the meetings need to be made public. Maybe once COVID is resolved, we can invite.

Will Gorum: As an agency owner, I work with other departments. They provide public meetings via Zoom. They are fully accessible. There is a way to make these accessible to literally anybody during the pandemic.

Nancy Quinn: Agreed and added to what Will and Jaimee said. I think that it would help to get an understanding of a complaint, the investigation process, if there are interpreters out there, and interpreters being hired that are not qualified. That will help in getting the word out. She knows we have had a complaint from interpreters regarding other interpreters. {can't hear/can't understand}. I think that it will help get our purpose out there and provide information of the process.

Carel Dunaway. Thank you. The meeting is adjourned. The time is 3:02.

Meeting adjourned at 3:02

Next meeting: may be on Zoom due to COVID-19.

Signature: _____

Date: _____